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Centennial Souvenir and History

SAINT JOHN'S
Evangelical and Reformed Church

Fort Wayne, Indiana

1844-1944

"I feel that God awaits me here"

This Record Is Dedicated

To all those who have labored loyally and faithfully through one hundred years to perpetuate the message and to establish the Kingdom of Christ through this church.

To all those who have come under the influence of our church and are carrying on the work of Christ with zeal and devotion.

To the youth and children of our church today, trusting that with prayers and wise guidance, they will carry forward the torch of the "Eternal Light," building a more perfect church and a better world.

To all who have here learned to know God, and have given their full measure of devotion in the struggle for freedom for all mankind.

To the honor and glory of God, and His son Jesus Christ, in whose kingdom there shall be no end.

ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE.

Anniversary Month Program

SUNDAY—October 1st ..... *World Fellowship Day*

8:00 a. m. World-Wide Communion Service

10:30 a. m. World-Wide Communion Service
Conducted by Dr. John W. Myers and the ministers in our congregation: Rev. Athniel Stienecker, Rev. Henry F. Hilgeman, Rev. R. A. Most

7:30 p. m. Historical Pageant—Miss Elsie Heck, Director

Tuesday—October 3rd ..... *Men's Banquet*

6:30 p. m. In the Social Hall
Speaker: The Rev. Robert C. Stanger, D. D., Detroit, President, Michigan-Indiana Synod

SUNDAY—October 8th ..... *Founders' Day*

9:15 a. m. Sunday School Department Celebration

10:30 a. m. Sermon by Dr. David D. Baker, Editor of The Messenger, St. Louis, Missouri

Wednesday, October 11th ..... *Women's Reception*
Speaker, Mrs. Ralph Holland, Indianapolis, State President of Federated Council of Church Women

7:45 p. m. In the Parish Hall

SUNDAY—October 15th ..... *Jubilee Sunday*

10:30 a.m. Sermon by Dr. L. W. Goebel, Chicago, Illinois
President of The Evangelical and Reformed Church

7:30 p. m. ..... *Sacred Concert*
Scottish Rite Male Choir—Fred Church, Director

Wednesday—October 18th ..... *Anniversary Banquet*

6:30 p. m. Parish Hall
Reminiscences and Entertainment

SUNDAY—October 22nd ..... *Consecration Sunday*

10:30 a. m. Sermon by Dr. Albert W. Palmer
President of The Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois

7:30 p. m. Community Service
Sermon by Dr. A. W. Pamer

Tuesday, October 24th ..... *Young People's Party*

7:30 p. m. By Youth Council

Thursday—October 26th ..... *Church Workers' Conference*
Speaker: The Rev. Ernest L. Harrold, West Creighton Christian Church

7:30 p. m. Topic: "More Important Than Ever."

SUNDAY—October 29th ..... *Re-Dedication Day*

10:30 a. m. "Carrying On the Tradition" ..... By Pastor, Dr. John W. Myers
Reception of New Members

7:30 p. m. Organ and Choir Program

Organ Recital by Miss Mabel Zehner, Organist, First Presbyterian Church, Mansfield, Ohio

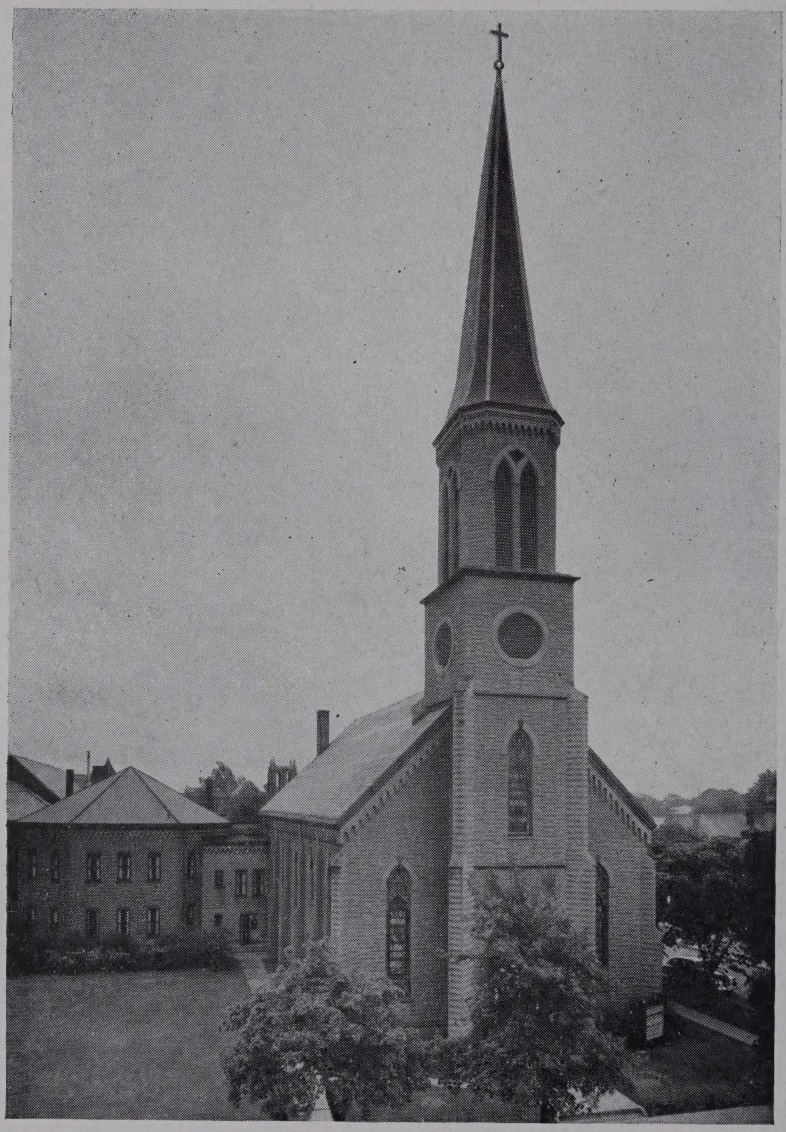
St. John's Choir, Fred W. Bloemker, Director

Mrs. G. Doye White, Organist

SAINT JOHN'S
Evangelical and Reformed Church

West Washington Boulevard at Webster Street
Fort Wayne, Indiana

John William Myers, M. A., S. T. D., Pastor



Our House of Worship, Fellowship and Service
"A church's spire reaching heavenward"

Celebrating

[One hundred years of service
A membership of one thousand]

Dr. John William Myers, Pastor since 1941

CENTENNIAL GREETINGS

St. John's Church has a high tradition and a rich heritage. When we review the events of the century we are reminded of the word of Scripture, "Others have labored and we have entered into their labors." Since Fort Wayne was a town of less than four thousand people, St. John's Church has been influential in shaping the character of the community.

Many hours of many people have been spent in making this anniversary celebration possible. This occasion will bring back many sacred memories. In this celebration, however, we shall miss approximately 117 youths who are at present serving their country in all parts of the world.

Appreciating the past, we cannot escape the challenge of the present and future. Together let us look back and rejoice in what has been accomplished by faithful servants in the past. As we pause for this celebration, let us get the poise and spirit for the same kind of adventurous living which possessed our fathers that we may establish as firmly and build as daringly and efficiently in our day as they did in theirs.

"Not to be ministered unto but to minister," in the name of God.

JOHN W. MYERS, *Pastor.*

GREETINGS

St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Christian Friends:

The Evangelical and Reformed Church, through me, extends its most cordial congratulations and good wishes. May the Lord of the Church Who has so richly blessed your life and work during the past century continue to guide you in the paths of service, enriching your own life and thus the life of the community and of the world.

Faithfully yours,

L. W. GOEBEL, President,
Evangelical and Reformed Church.

It is my privilege to extend hearty greetings to you on behalf of the Michigan-Indiana Synod on the occasion of your 100th anniversary. There are only two churches in our whole Synod which have attained an age such as yours. It is rather remarkable to see how strong and vigorous your church still is, and encouraging to know the ambitious plans for the future. The Christian Church is the "body of Christ," and "when one member rejoices all the members rejoice with it." Please accept therefore the hearty greetings and the best wishes of your sister churches in the Michigan-Indiana Synod of our beloved Church.

May you go from strength to strength.

ROBERT C. STANGER, President,
Michigan-Indiana Synod.

The Fort Wayne Ministerial Association wishes to congratulate you on the outstanding achievements of Saint John's Evangelical and Reformed Church during its first one hundred years.

It has made a continuing and significant contribution to the life of the community. Under the excellent leadership of Dr. John W. Myers, whom we all love, you will continue to achieve for Christ and the Kingdom.

We ask God's blessing to rest upon you.

ERNEST L. HARROLD, President,
Fort Wayne Ministerial Association.

In the name of *The Messenger* I am glad to be able to greet St. John's Church, both pastor and people, on this occasion. I am reminded of the thousands whose lives have been fortified in the immediate fellowship of this congregation, of that larger number in the city of Fort Wayne whose lives have been at least unconsciously touched by your ministry, and of that innumerable throng in all parts of the world to whom through the out-reach of the church you have had a share in extending the joys of the gospel. I congratulate you upon this century of service.

Kindest of greetings.

DAVID D. BAKER,
Editor, The Messenger.

We are grateful for the life and work of St. John's. One thing we have in common with you. Both our school and your congregation enjoyed the fruits of the labors of Dr. Jacob Bossard, who in both instances was instrumental in laying foundations upon which others were privileged to build.

Mission House College and Seminary send you greetings on the successful completion of one hundred years of service in the vineyard of the Lord. Throughout the years you have held a place of influence and leadership in our denomination. May the Lord bless and prosper the labor of your hands in years to come.

PAUL GROSSHUESCH, President,
Mission House College and Seminary.

GREETINGS

On behalf of Heidelberg College I send greetings to St. John's Church on the occasion of its One Hundredth Anniversary.

The Church is to be congratulated on its first century of achievement. May its contribution to the cause of Christ and His Kingdom be even greater in the second century of its existence.

CLARENCE E. JOSEPHSON, President,
Heidelberg College.

The spiritual life of our community has been deeply enriched by the active existence of St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church. Upon your One Hundredth Anniversary I extend greetings on behalf of the Associated Churches of Fort Wayne and offer sincere congratulations for your Christian performances of the past. May the years ahead add countless new opportunities for service and be rich in results achieved.

DAVID HOGG, President
The Associated Churches of Fort Wayne.

AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE
(From a Ministerial Son of the Congregation—a Professor in Mission House College and Seminary.)

Our dear old St. John's Reformed Church has been a spiritual mother to her sons and daughters. Her influence through consecrated leaders has radiated in many directions in our own and in foreign lands. Sacred memories are awakened in us by this centennial celebration so that we are led to pray for God's blessings to continue upon her and her members. Congratulations and sincere felicitations from one of her grateful sons.

LOUIS C. HESSERT

The choice of the name St. John is a masterpiece, and means "God is gracious." John's message is that of the heart for the heart. He gave striking words when he said, "Little children love one another." No wonder the forefathers were inspired, and in turn inspired posterity to the work of the Kingdom; in the home, the parish, in instruction, in confirmation, and in the insistence to keep the Lord's Day holy.

As a boy the challenge to the ministry came to me. Dr. Carl Schaaf wrote in my autograph album, after my serious sickness and the death of my brother, "It was not so very long ago, thou wast so very ill. A brother's heart with loving glow, sick seriously and still. The Brother God Himself did take, thee he left us here below To serve Him who loved thee so, Be now thy highest aim."

Congratulations St. John's.

REV. HENRY F. HILGEMAN

St. John's Church has meant very much in the life of the Fort Wayne Children's Home. Because of the interest of this Church and its pastor this Home was organized in Fort Wayne. And ever after, for some sixty years, St. John's has been a staunch and loyal supporter of the Home. So with gratitude and joy in our hearts we send our heartiest congratulations to St. John's for its one hundred years of Christian service.

Our hopes and prayers are that St. John's may long continue to be a power and a blessing in the work of the Kingdom of God—as it has been a blessing for so many years to the Fort Wayne Children's Home.

Sincerely yours,
ATHNIEL STIENECKER, Superintendent.

St. John's Officers and Leaders

ANNIVERSARY YEAR

THE CONSISTORY

ELDERS
(Front Row)

Charles Wedler
Forrest Bunner
Clarence E. Rossell
Dr. John W. Myers, *Chairman*
Edward Buecker
Herbert Siebold
Louis Zollinger

DEACONS
(Second Row)

George Ashley
Charles Fetter
Chester Schuelke, *Secretary*
Walter Klebe, *Treasurer*
Elmer Kolmerten
Stees Sponhauer
Emanuel Engelmann
John Doermer
Fred Bloemker, *Vice-Chair*
Walter McCormick

Jacob Bill, *Life Elder*
Deceased, June, 1944

Howard Potts, *Deacon*

Carey Baker, *Deacon*

TRUSTEES

Louis Zollinger
Clarence E. Rossell
Forrest Bunner

THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chester E. Schuelke, *Chairman;* Miss Christine Zollinger, *Secretary;* James Doelling, Ralph Valentine, Mrs. David Peters, Miss Esther Bracht, Miss Io Marbaugh. All the General and Departmental Sunday School superintendents are advisory members.

BUILDING COUNCIL

Louis Zollinger, *Chairman*
Edward F. Jansson, Chicago—Architect

Miss Esther Bracht, *Secretary*
Herbert G. Siebold
John Doermer
Edward Buecker
Mrs. Walter Klebe
Mrs. Ross Philley
G. Doyal White
C. E. Rossell
Mrs. T. Ross Schannen
T. C. Schaefer
Frank Zink
Miss Henrietta Altekruse
Elmer Kolmerten
Mrs. Walter Hill
Robert Wass
Miss Eleanor Reiff

St. John's Officers and Leaders

ANNIVERSARY YEAR

CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS AND STAFF

Front row: Herbert G. Siebold, Secretary of Congregation; Earl H. Siebold, Vice-Pres.; Miss Della Heck, Church Secretary; Walter E. Klebe, Treasurer.

Back row: Mrs. G. Doyal White, Organist; Fred W. Bloemker, Choir Director, and Dr. John W. Myers, Pastor. Jacob Bill, deceased, was president at the time of his death in June.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRESIDENTS

President of Consistory	Dr. John M. Myers
Vice-President of Congregation	Earl Siebold
Secretary of Consistory	Chester Schuelke
Secretary of Congregation	Herbert Siebold
Treasurer	Walter Klebe
Church Secretary	Miss Della Heck
Organist	Mrs. G. Doyal White
Choir Director	Fred W. Bloemker
Chairman of Trustees	L. F. Zollinger
President of Guild	Mrs. Herman J. Rockhill
President of Brotherhood	F. Edward Servos
Superintendent of Sunday School	C. E. Rossell
Chairman of Building Council	Louis Zollinger
Chairman of Youth Council	Miss Esther Bracht

Anniversary Committees

ANNIVERSARY CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Front row, left to right: Mrs. John Peters, Mrs. Homer Altevogt, Miss Doris Siebold, Secretary, Judge William H. Schannen, Chairman, Mrs. Gust Rogge, Miss Lucille Frost, Miss Marie Johnston, Historian.

Second row, left to right: Ralph Valentine, Dr. Myers, Theodore Schaefer, Earl Siebold, Miss Elsie Heck, Fred W. Stolte, Vice-Chairman, Henry Kolmerten, Walter Klebe, Treasurer, Fred W. Bloemker.

COMMITTEES

PROGRAM—Mrs. Homer Altevogt, Judge Wm. H. Schannen, Dr. John W. Myers.

INVITATION AND PUBLICITY—C. E. Rossell, Miss Della Heck, Miss Doris Siebold.

HISTORICAL—Miss Marie Johnston, Henry Kolmerten, Rev. Henry Hilgeman, Mrs. Christ. Hessert, Miss Elsie Heck, Miss Helen Rapp, Miss Florence Buecker.

PRINTING—Ralph Valentine, T. C. Schaefer, Dr. Myers.

BANQUET—Mrs. Herman J. Rockhill.

SUNDAY SCHOOL RALLY—C. E. Schuelke, Fred Ruby, Mrs. C. E. Stiffler, Miss Helen Karnap, Mrs. Frank Davis, Miss Jacqueline Kanouse, John Conser, Miss Marjorie Bill.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTY—Miss Esther Bracht and Youth Council.

MEN'S BANQUET—F. E. Servos, C. E. Rossell, C. E. Schuelke, Francis Herdrick, Richard Luther.

MUSIC—E. H. Siebold, Mrs. G. Doyal White, Fred W. Bloemker, H. G. Siebold.

NEW MEMBERS—Theo. C. Schaefer, C. E. Rossell, Geo. Ashley, Carey Baker, Emanuel Englemann, Mrs. Edward Fleck, Mrs. George Fischer.

WOMEN'S BANQUET—Mrs. E. H. Siebold and Guild Board.

DECORATIONS—Mrs. Gordon Brown, Miss Dorothy Bloemker, Mrs. Howard Potts, Miss Alma Bloemker, Mrs. Max Collins.

FINANCE—Walter Klebe, Elmer Kolmerten, Walter McCormick, John Doermer.

CHOIR—Fred W. Bloemker.

HISTORICAL PAGEANT—Miss Elsie Heck, Miss Helen Rapp, Miss Marie Johnston.

HOSPITALITY—Mrs. Gust Rogge, Mrs. John W. Myers and Church Cabinet.

St. John's First Hundred Years

Marie Johnston

Northern Indiana in the 1830's was a level, fertile, heavily forested region dotted with small lakes and marshes. Travel was mainly by rivers and worn traces along the streams and through the forests, for the road system of the state had not yet been extended much above Indianapolis. The woods were filled with wild animals which furnished meat and skins for the frontiersmen and a source of revenue for the hunter, trapper, and trader. To the northeast, near the Ohio boundary, was Fort Wayne at the junction of the St. Joseph, St. Mary's, and Maumee rivers. Since pre-Revolutionary times this had been considered a stragetic point and the site had been held in turn by the French, English, and American governments. It marked the Maumee-Wabash portage and hence had always been an important trading post. In 1830 the incorporated "Town of Fort Wayne" was one year old. It was a log cabin town with three hundred inhabitants. Indians and white men of several nationalities and languages walked the poorly drained streets. On severe winter nights wolves howled about the cabins. In summer swarms of mosquitoes rose from the swamps, and malaria and ague made life wretched for the inhabitants.

During the 1830's many German immigrants found their way into Fort Wayne and established homes therein or on the land nearby. Many of them had been lured to the American frontier by the promise of better economic and social conditions and more political freedom. Other Germans from the older eastern communities came to acquire some of the fertile cheap farmland. Nearly all were poor in money but rich in energy and ambition. Most of these settlers acquired tracts of land, cleared the forests, and built up prosperous farms and orchards. Those immigrants who had not the means to buy land engaged in labor of various types, and it was largely due to their exertions that Fort Wayne in the next decade became a town of brick, stone, and frame homes and business houses. The German Protestants who settled in and around Fort Wayne were noted for their frugality. The fact that the 1840 census gives only forty-two white illiterates over twenty years of age for Wayne Township, Allen County, speaks well for the type of immigrant that settled therein during the 1830's. German newspapers and books published in both America and Germany had a large sale here, which is another evidence of the high caliber of these settlers.

Th European Germans, coming from a country having a highly organized and strictly regulated ecclesiastical system, were bewildered by the lack of religious manifestation and the religious freedom which, paradoxically enough, existed side by side on the American frontier. The extreme individualism of the frontiersman led to the organization of many new religious sects, and one ex-European theologian is reported to have exclaimed, "How can I live in a country where a new denomination arises almost daily?" Many times groups of earnest people joined together regardless of creed and founded a union church without a pastor. Then they were dependent upon the itinerant preachers who came into the community at irregular and far-spaced intervals. Many of these men were sincere and sainted missionaries, but too often congregations were deceived by persons of doubtful moral character who volunteered to minister unto them. Usually they were poorly trained, and the services were a far cry from the elaborate ritualistic services of the homeland. Many an early settler must have recalled with nostalia the beautiful churches and impressive rituals of the fatherland while sitting in a crude cabin or meeting house listening to the fiery, extemporaneous sermons of the typical frontier preacher.

Another handicap existed. For the most part these settlers could not understand English, and there were practically no German preachers in this area as

early as 1830. The Lutheran and German Reformed churches, seeing this great western field, competed for its control. The call, "Come over and help us," rang from all parts of the frontier to the established synods and seminaries of the East. The Reformed Church set up a missionary organization, but in 1833 its Board of Missions acknowledged that the calls for aid from Indiana, Ohio and Virginia could not be answered. An Ohio Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States had been established in 1820, but because of distance from the eastern centers reorganized itself as the Synod of Ohio in 1824. This aided as far as problems of administration were concerned but still did not touch the crux of the matter—sufficient German preachers to meet the demands of the Germans in the Middle West. Of the thirty-nine students in the Reformed Seminaries in 1835, it was reported that only seven or eight could speak German adequately. In an effort to cope with the problem, the Reformed Church in the United States established contact with the American Home Missionary Society. In an attempt to form a base for operations, the Classis of the West (Indiana and Illinois) was organized in 1837. It was of brief duration, however, going out of existence in 1840, and our particular sphere of interest, Indiana, was left as it had been in the beginning, on its own resources as far as activities of a Reformed nature were concerned.

The Rev. Peter Herbruck in his *Reminiscences,* as recorded in Dr. T. P. Bollinger's *History of the First Reformed Church of Canton, Ohio,* leaves the only account of a Reformed minister visiting early Indiana. Rev. Herbruck was an Ohio preacher with a strong missionary urge. In the year 1840 he received an invitation to visit Miami County, Indiana, where lived a number of families that had belonged to one of his Ohio congregations. After walking to Massillon, he and his companion rode the canal boat to Cleveland and then crossed the lake to Toledo, where they secured horses and rode to Defiance. From that point they rode the canal boat to Fort Wayne. After a night there they took the Wabash-Erie Canal packet to Huntington, which was then a village of about eighteen houses. There Rev. Herbruck conducted services in a schoolhouse and preached a funeral service for a former parishioner just outside of the village. Securing the loan of two horses, they then went on their way to Miami County. Here Rev. Herbruck preached four times in private homes, administered the Lord's Supper, and baptized a number of children. It was stated that no Reformed minister had ever visited that community before. Unfortunately, such conditions existed in hundreds of areas on the American frontier during the period prior to the Civil War.

As early as 1834 twenty Fort Wayne German families gathered together for worship. Finally in 1836 Rev. Jesse Hoover, an ordained minister of the Lutheran Church, came to Fort Wayne. Soon afterward he gathered practically all the German Protestants, regardless of confessional differences, into a liberal Lutheran organization. For a time the services were held in the court house and other places, where all was harmonious under the tolerant leadership of Rev. Hoover. Early in 1838 he died and was succeeded by Rev. Frederick Wyneken, of Hanover, who continued the mission work of his predecessor . In the early 40's, however, he took a leave of absence for a trip to Germany. Upon his return he showed a decidedly strict Lutheran tendency. He announced, probably in 1843 or early 1844, that henceforth strict adherence to the Lutheran faith would be the rule and that only Lutherans could receive the Holy Sacrament, as all other believers were in error. Imagine the consternation of those of the Reformed faith! They were barred from the church which they had assisted in establishing. There was only one thing to do—withdraw and organize a Reformed church. At once they petitioned the Lutherans for permission to use temporarily the church building which had been built through their common efforts. This request was vigorously denied by Rev. Wyneken and the Consis-

tory on the grounds that the withdrawals did not desire nor intend to establish a Reformed congregation but a false-teaching congregation which the Lutherans could not conscientiously aid in any way. Upon being contacted, the First Presbyterian congregation granted the small group the use of the Presbyterian schoolhouse.

Having already labored to organize and build a new church and develop a good sized and strong congregation, the small Reformed group could well appreciate the difficulties in beginning anew. Not daunted, however, they organized the St. John's congregation early in 1844 with the aid of Rev. Andrew Carroll. The scanty earliest records of the congregation give the names of only six men and their wives as charter members. Other accounts and histories, however, state that there were fourteen charter members. The recorded names are: Ernest Dothage, Conrad Dreiblebiss, Rudolf Jasper, William Kolmerten, George Nill, Christian Siebold and their wives. Throughout the century members of these families have taken an active part in the affairs of the congregation.

The determination of the infant congregation to move forward and make a permanent church home is evidenced by the purchase of Lot No. 443 in Hanna's Addition on August 14, 1844. This is the second lot from Webster Street on the south side of Washington Boulevard. It is 60x150 feet and was purchased from Samuel Hanna for $200 by George Nill, Conrad Dreiblebiss, Christian Siebold and Rudolf Jasper. These men gave a mortgage to be paid by two notes, each for $100, one payable one year from date and the second two years from date. On this lot the new church building was raised on January 2, 1845. Today faith, courage, determination and money will build a church edifice. These early church fathers possessed faith, courage and determination, but little money. Instead they gave thought and physical energy to the project. This plain but dignified church was the simple type of meeting house found in the early Middle West. It was a well-built frame building with a paneled double door entrance. Within three years a steeple was added. The earliest account book (1846) has many entries for paint, oil, hewn logs, siding, nails and hardware, but little for labor, since most of that was donated by the members themselves. As nearly as can be computed from the early records, the entire cost of this first church was $617.59. The list of persons making contributions to the new church reads like the roll call of the Fort Wayne citizenry at that time. Such entries as "Reed in the Drug Store, William Rockhill in Furniture, Allen Hamilton, Andrew Mayer, John G. Swift, Saul Freeman, G. B. Dubois, F. P. Randall (city orders)" are only a few of interest. The process of finishing and furnishing the building required a longer time, but the structure was evidently used for services as soon as the roof was on. The first pews are said to have been hewn logs, and these were not replaced until about 1848 or 1850.

The First Church Building

During this organization and building period Rev. Andrew Carroll ministered unto the group. Those baptized during 1844 were: John Jacob Lindlach, Elizabeth Bauer, Luise Wigelius, Heinrich Morell, Ernest Jacob Jasper, Sophie Elisabeth Barett, Ernest Heinrich Hildebrand, and Sophia Luise Augusta Lucke. The 1844 marriages were: John Seibold and Appollonia Bierli, and David Eggeman and Maria Dreiblebiss. The two burials in 1844 were those of Heinrich Siebold, aged 3 years, 9 months, and 8 days, and Heinrich Hilgemann, aged 25 years. The first confirmation class was received on Easter 1845 and included: Jacob Jung, Stephan Jung, Jacob Dreiblebiss, Katharine Blomker, Margarth Baschelier, Katharine Drieblebiss, and Margareth Coling. It is interesting to note, in checking these early records, that in the year 1854 the baptisms of David Louis Richard, Albin Affred Yoquelet, Marie Louise Rosseloz, and Jean Auguste Chevelier are recorded in French. Judging from the notation accompanying the names, these families were from the Canton of Berne, Switzerland. The records also show that a large number of the German members were natives of Lienen, Prussia.

Although there are no early sources to authenticate it, events and later accounts indicate that the congregation had elected trustees during the first or second years. Nevertheless it is not until January 19, 1846, that the Articles of Agreement or Incorporation were recorded in Allen County. The aforesaid document is written in English and signed by the Clerk, John Deppeler. At the congregational meeting on January 17, 1846, Rudolf Jasper was "appointed Chairman and John Deppeler, Clerk, by the members." Christian Morell, Ludwig Steaf, and J. H. T. Stachle (or Stachel) were elected trustees. The following resolutions were passed and unanimously adopted:

> *1. The meeting house of said congregation is designed for gospel preaching in the German language.*
>
> *2. The Trustees in performing their duty shall be subject to the will of the majority of lawful voters of the congregation.*
>
> *3. The Trustees shall be bound not to give the use of said meeting house to other denominations without good reason and only under certain conditions.*
>
> *4. The first Monday in the month of November in each year shall be the day of General Election of the Trustees and other Church officers, as likewise for general settlement.*
>
> *5. Three months before the close of each ministerial year a new contract must be made between the minister and the Congregation for the following year: if not, the parties are to be considered as separate for the future.*
>
> *And be it further remembered that the name of the church and congregation for which said trustees have been elected is "The German Evangelical Reformed Congregation of St. John."*

On March 26, following this congregational action of incorporation, George Nill, Conrad Dreiblebiss, Christian Siebold and Rudolf Jasper "in consideration of the sum of one dollar" conveyed by deed of covenant to the "Trustees of the German Evangelical Reformed Congregation of St. John at Fort Wayne, Indiana" Lot No. 443 in Hanna's Addition, which had been held in trust "for the use and benefit of the German Reformed Church of Fort Wayne and on which a meeting house for the Congregation had been erected." This deed was recorded in Allen County on August 25, 1848.

During the first years of the congregation the financial reports show very small sums. The Sunday collection varied from thirteen cents to nine-one cents, and a ten dollar subscription looms sufficiently large in the column to attract instant attention. Under such circumstances the furnishings of the church were simple and the pastor's salary of $3.00 per month could not always be paid on time. In 1859 the indebtedness of the congregation was $646.16. Subscriptions were hard to collect, and often the Consistory had to rule that those who had not paid their pledges must give notes.

The first inventory, undated but probably about 1848, contains some articles of interest. The first entry is "21 wooden benches with backs." These were undoubtedly rather new and a source of pride, since hewn logs had been the first pews. This list, including 3 iron stoves with pipes, 1 wooden collection plate, 4 brass and lead lamps, 1 long handled collection bag with bells, and 1 hymnal, makes us realize that this was a period other than our own. In 1852 an organ was purchased and in 1855 the Reformed Hymnal was procured. Even this early our forefathers realized the value of music in worship.

Early in 1846 Rev. Carroll resigned and Rev. J. A. Beyer, who was then connected with the Presbyterian Church, came to St. John's. For various reasons disputes and quarrels arose and, as Rev. Beyer refused to conduct confirmation, his resignation was requested. Early in the next year Rev. F. B. Altermatt of the Erie Classis, German Reformed Church, came as pastor. During this year, on September 29, 1847, St. John's German Reformed Church was taken under the care of the Fort Wayne Presbytery and Rev. Altermatt was received therein also. Within a short time he showed that his personal conduct was unbecoming, not only in a minister but in a Christian. He was cited to appear before the Presbytery but was so successful in eluding it that it was not until 1852 that his case was issued in his absence and he was deposed. His services at St. John's, however, had been dispensed with early in the year 1848.

At this time the congregation, determined to make no mistake in the choice of a minister, appealed to Dr. Schneck, editor of the Reformed paper, "Weekly Messenger," at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, for aid in finding a suitable pastor. Upon his recommendation, J. Bossard, then a student and instructor at Mercersburg Seminary (Class 1847), was called by the congregation. He accepted the call and came in June 1848. The following enlightening paragraph is quoted from an entry in the history of the Fort Wayne Presbytery:

> *At a meeting September 5, 1848, Mr. Jacob Bossard, a licentiate of the German Reformed Classis of Maryland, was taken under care of Presbytery. A call from St. John's Church for his pastoral services was presented to Presbytery, (by Elder Siebold) and being found in order, was put in his hands and accepted by him.*
>
> *After the usual examination, and a sermon on Luke IV: 1-13, he was ordained and installed pastor. Rev. W. M. Donaldson preached the sermon; Rev. J. Wolfe presided, propounded the constitutional questions, and made the ordaining prayer; Rev. J. H. Nevin charged the pastor; and Rev. J. Grier the people. . . .*

The five-year pastorate of Rev. Bossard brought many worthwhile changes within the congregation. The administration of church discipline relieved much disorder and gave the congregation a more definite program of action. Three rules were adopted for the reception of members that placed that act on a definite basis. The first (1848) stipulated that members might be received within eight days after their names were read in service, provided no complaints were received in the interim. The second (1850) stated that if a member did not attend, contribute, or take part in the service, unless for good reason which included illness or poverty, his name should be struck from the membership roll. The third (1852) provided that when persons reported for reception into the church the consistory should investigate as to whether they kept the Sabbath holy; went into or kept the tavern open on Sunday. If, upon investigation, the Consistory was satisfied, the names of the applicants were to be announced to the Congregation three times. Under certain conditions the Lord's Supper was to be refused. It is needless to say that these were not dead statutes on the books, but the actual practices of the period.

Rev. Bossard was a thorough scholar and a zealous worker. It is said that his linguistic abilities were remarkable. He evidenced great interest in further-

ing the work of the Reformed Church and upon leaving Fort Wayne labored for such in Wisconsin. There he was one of the founders of the Mission House College at Sheboygan and taught there until his death. Such a personality could not fail to leave his impress upon any congregation which he served, and St. John's was enriched by its contact with him. In looking ahead the leaders of the church felt that more space would be needed and on February 20, 1851, the Trustees, Henry Drover and Conrad Piepenbrink, purchased Lot No. 442 in the Hanna Addition from Christian and Charlotte Eix for the sum of $350. This is the corner lot of the present church property and is 60x150 feet. On April 4, 1854, the Trustees, Jacob Reilling, William Borger, and Frederick Hulsman, purchased for $700 Lot No. 444 in the Hanna Addition from William Borger. These purchases gave the congregation a total frontage of 185 feet on Washington Boulevard in downtown Fort Wayne at a cost of only $1250. Contrast these figures with the conservative evaluation of $150,000 for the congregation's downtown property today.

Upon Rev. Bossard's resignation the congregation called Rev. Kuss of Louisville. Since he was contemplating affiliation with another denomination, he declined the call but recommended Rev. H. Benz, a young theological graduate who served as a supply for one year. At the end of that period congregational matters were in a state that did not justify the immediate engagement of a pastor. In September 1855, upon the recommendation of Dr. Gerhardt of Tiffin, Ohio, Rev. J. H. Klein of Sandusky, Ohio, began his thirteen-year ministry at St. John's. By this time the membership had attained numerical and financial strength sufficient to justify changes which made his pastorate a busy one.

When the congregation of St. John's was organized there was some discussion concerning affiliation with a synod. Since at that time the Reformed Church was scarcely known in Indiana, there was little knowledge of a Reformed Synod, and no action was taken. After 1847 the close fellowship and perhaps financial assistance of the Presbyterian Church served to nurture and hearten the struggling congregation, and the matter was given no further consideration. In the fall of 1855 the Reformed congregation requested and received release from the Presbyterian group. In January 1856, during the annual meeting of the St. Joseph Classis, the congregation was received into that Classis. Arrangements had been made in 1855 to become affiliated with the Synod of Ohio. This necessitated the adoption of a new constitution, which was effected in the same year.

In the early 1860's a number of cases requiring discipline arose. Problems of a very personal nature were dealt with firmly by the pastor, consistory and congregation. Indeed, one can believe that an individual would be most circumspect as to his words and deeds when he knew that for a mistake he might have to face several consistory inquiries and even a congregational meeting. One man's name was struck from the roll because he deserted his family. A married couple had several sessions before the Consistory because of inability to adjust their domestic differences. One man was told that if he wished to remain a member he must close his tavern on Sunday. Two women were brought before several consecutive sessions of the Consistory that charges of gossip might be sifted. In 1862 a child who had misbehaved in the school had to appear with his parents before a regular and a special session of the Consistory before he was permitted to return to school. The ruling was passed in 1865 that no lodge members could be admitted to the membership of the church. In fact, the church at that time exercised jurisdiction over nearly every phase of the members' lives.

During the Civil War the cost of living rose sharply. This is reflected in the fact that although the pastor's salary was set at $300 in 1855, it was raised several times during the period. At the same time, however, there was frequent urging for the members to pay their church obligations. Sometime during this period

the second parsonage of the congregation was built. This modest brick house was located on Lot No. 444 and served as the pastor's residence until 1916. The 1864 budget of $900 seems very meager to us today when several thousand dollars are expended yearly to carry on the work of the congregation. The above amount did not suffice in 1864 either, for a new organ was purchased for the sum of $840.

One of the largest undertakings of this period was the erection of a new school building. That there was a parochial school before this time is certain since the earliest inventory lists school benches and blackboards. Another evidence pointing to the existence of a school is a resolution of 1855 that provided for the making of benches and tables for the school. Whether or not there was a school building is unknown. At any rate, discussion for a new school building was opened November 2, 1857. In the March 1858 meeting the discussion continued with results. It was decided that a building 24x36x12 feet should be built, but on which lot is not stated. According to reminiscences of some older members, it stood at the back of Lot No. 443. There is a possibility that the building said to have been on Lot No. 444 was an earlier one. The Consistory, with the addition of Fred Altekruse, Henry Hilgeman, and William Schiefer, was to constitute the school board. The School Building Committee selected was "Vodemark, William Boerger, Huelsman, Fieler and Schiefer." Further, it was declared that the building should be ready for use by May 15, 1859. In the summer of 1858 subscriptions of $220 were secured for the new school. The members living on the Piqua Road were excused from contributing as they intended to build a school of their own. Mr. O. J. Accola offered his services as teacher and was employed at $18 per month. A congregational teacher had many other duties besides that of year-round teaching. He might be the church organist, the consistory and congregational clerk, the Bible study teacher for the more advanced students, and the bell ringer for funerals. Mr. Accola resigned in November of 1859 and the next teacher's name to appear is that of J. F. Weber. In 1860 the Trustees ordered the congregation to turn ovr a residence it owned for the use of the teacher. In 1862 the Consistory ruled that if more than two children per family attended the church school a tuition of fifty cents per quarter per child should be paid. In 1865 the tuition was raised to $1.25 per child per quarter for children of members and $1.50 per child per quarter for children of non-members. In 1863 the school was reported to be in a "flourishing condition," having 77 "scholars," 38 boys and 39 girls. The salary of the teacher was raised by subscription and it, together with his residence, may have furnished a good living in those days, as by the close of the war the first teacher was receiving $600-$700 per year. During the reconstruction period the salary was cut. At that time, however, there were two teachers. Th second rceived $350 per year in the spring of 1867. It must be remembered, however, that sometimes the subscriptions were not paid and the salary was long in coming.

In this school, as would be expected, the children were taught in German. The early teachers were typical of the time in that they were the "schoolmaster type." On the other hand, they seem to have been better trained than the average public school teacher of that day. In October 1863, however, the question "Shall English be taught in the school?" was raised. Just when action was taken on it is unknown, but according to the recollections of a former pupil, one period per day was devoted to English.

The Minutes of the Fort Wayne School Board for January 2, 1867, contain a letter from Rev. J. H. Klein which is quoted below:

Fort Wayne, Indiana, Jany 2, 1867.

To the Trustees of the Public Schools of the City of Fort Wayne,
Respected Gentlemen:

The Consistory of The German Reformed Church of this City would respectfully ask your body to take into favorable consideration the subject of taking charge of the Parochial Schools of said Church and make the same a German Department of our Public Schools. We have about 150 scholars in care of our able teachers.

If the above proposition should meet your favor please inform said consistory under what conditions and regulations such a union as above referred to could be effected. We do not wish to make any conditions, but will await the result of your deliberations, and are prepared to give any further explanations that may be desired on your part.

I am, Very respectfully, Your obedient servant,

J. H. KLEIN,
Pastor of the Ger. Ref. Church.

The action of the School Board on this appeal is shown in the following quotation from the minutes of the same meeting:

After a thorough consideration of the subject in all its bearings it was unanimously agreed that however desirable it might be to make such an arrangement as was proposed, the present condition of the School Funds would not justify this Board in assuming any further obligations, and that the Superintendent be respectfully requested to confer with the Rev. Mr. Klein and convey to them the opinion of the Board, stating further that if it is still their desire at the end of our school year he make such an arrangement. The Board will be happy to give the matter their fullest consideration.

The records for the next few years make no further mention of this matter. In the financial report of the congregation for 1868 J. Weber (teacher) received $568.30; Simon Stephen or Neffin (teacher) $233.33, and Henry Bernhart (teacher) $193.48 or .68 and was owed an additional $56.52. Since the records show that Mr. Weber resigned May 4, 1868, these facts suggest that another was engaged to finish the term or year. Nothing was found concerning the year 1869. The Consistory minutes for March 1780 state that the offer of Superintendent Smart of the Public Schools was accepted. The conditions of the offer are unknown except that the Church continued to furnish the building. From the minutes of the Fort Wayne School Board on June 11, 1870, the following paragraph is taken:

The City was divided into two districts for German schools, to be divided by Calhoun Street. The School for the East End shall be held in the Clay School; and that for the West, in the School Building on the corner of Washington and Webster Streets. Resolved that the Superintendent be instructed to make the necessary arrangements for opening these Schools at the Commencement of the Next School Year; and that the children be permitted to choose the School which they will attend.

Under the yearly Schedule of Teachers for the Fort Wayne Schools, 1871-1893, the name of Carl Schwartz, teacher at West German School is listed. The following names of assistants at various times within that period also appear: A. L. Vordermark, Mary Schrei (or Schrey), Anna Margaret Doermer, Lena Koepf, Anna Boss, Sarah Schaaf, H. Mary Doerffel, Emma C. Rau, and Caroline Vordermark. The special music and writing teachers, Professor Heath and Professor Tyler, are sometimes listed.

The time, money, and thought which this congregation spent upon its school is significant in two respects. First of all, education was recognized as a valuable asset. Second, the preservation of the German language and an understanding of the German culture were deemed desirable. The action of the Board of City Schools suggests, too, that the German element in Fort Wayne was respected and sufficiently strong by this time to receive consideration.

Another important event of this period indicates the increasing number of Germans in the Middle West and the tenacity with which they clung to their language. In 1850 there were 28,584 persons of German birth in Indiana, and more arrived during the next decades. Other states of the Middle West experienced comparable increases. At this time most of the sessions of the Synod of Ohio and its Classes of the German Reformed Church were carried on in the English language. The more recently arrived Germans and those from communities that had jealously held on to their language were unable to take part in the discussions. At the meeting of the General Synod in Dayton, Ohio (November 1866) a request was made by the Synod of Ohio and five of its Classes for the organization of another German Synod. This request was granted and it was arranged that delegates chosen by the five interested Classes should hold a meeting at the German Reformed Church at Fort Wayne, Indiana, in May 1867, for the purpose of effecting the organization of such a synod. On the opening day, May 28, 1867, delegates arrived but a quorum was not present until the following day, when the delegates proceeded to organize the German Reformed Synod of the Northwest. The total number of delegates attending this session was twenty-three. The five Classes represented were St. Joseph, Indiana; Sheboygan, Heidelberg, and Erie. This group represented eighty-two ministers, 162 congregations, and 8660 confirmed members.

This event marks the beginning of St. John's participation in denominational affairs. In the hundred years of her existence St. John's Church has been the scene of many synodical meetings: General Synod in 1875 and 1936; Synod of the Northwest, 1867, 1878, 1884, 1891, 1896, 1905 and 1911; Midwest Synod, 1924 and 1932; and Michigan-Indiana Synod in 1941. Five young men of the congregation have trained for the ministry, namely: Dr. Louis Hessert, Rev. H. F. Hilgeman, Rev. Martin Hirsch, Rev. William Kruse, and Edward Werkman, who died while a theological student. In addition, three pastors and Dr. Hessert have assumed professorships at the Mission House. Certainly St. John's has a right to evidence interest in denominational affairs.

In 1868 Rev. Klein resigned to become a professor at the Sheboygan Mission House. Upon his resignation, fifty-eight members (really families, as only heads of families are listed) requested and received a release to found the German Salem Reformed Crurch. In special session the St. Joseph Classes granted the request and passed the following resolution:

> *Resolved that the money in the treasury of the Ladies' Aid and of the Young Peoples' Society shall be turned over to the new organization, and the St. John's Church be requested to divide the congregational money into two equal parts.*

Early in September 1868 Rev. F. R. Schwedes began his work at St. John's. Almost immediately plans for the building of a new church were decided upon. Fort Wayne, because of better transportation methods and the varied opportunities it offered, had grown to a town of about 17,500 by this time. At the same time it had taken on many of the characteristics of a city. The environs of the town had extended until the property of St. John's no longer seemed suburban. The congregation had grown from 14 in 1844, to 50 in 1848, and 106 in 1850. By 1868 the total membership was 248. A group of this size demanded larger and improved facilities. Early in 1869 the construction work began and on July 11 of that year the corner stone was laid. The following article from the "Fort Wayne Gazette" of July 12, 1869, gives an excellent account of the ceremony attending the event:

> *A large crowd assembled to witness the laying of the corner stone of the First German Reform Church, corner of Washington and Webster Streets, yesterday afternoon. The ceremonies were opened with prayer by Rev. Mr. Birch, after which Professor Rust of Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio, deliv-*

ered an eloquent oration. He was followed by a very neat address from Rev. Dr. Skinner. The choir and Sunday School children sang beautiful and appropriate songs when Professor Rust and Rev. Mr. Schwedes, Pastor, proceeded to lay the corner stone in which was deposited a copy of the Holy Bible, Catechism, and important documents of the congregation with a list of the members from the time it was first organized. Prayer was then offered by Rev. Mr. Steffy, The Doxology sung by the whole multitude and a benediction pronounced by Rev. Mr. Cast. All seemed well pleased and hope was indulged that the edifice would soon be completed which will be not only an ornament but a valuable addition to our thriving city. The cost is estimated at $20.000.

More than two years were to pass before the structure was finished. They must have been very busy but very happy ones for the congregation. At last the Gothic building was complete in every detail and the dedication ceremonies were held. A member who participated in this service states that the congregation gathered before the door and sang in German "Now We Thank We All Our God." Then Rev. Schwedes unlocked the door saying, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost I open this door for the service of the congregation." Only he who has participated in the building and dedication of a new church can appreciate fully the spirit that must have filled the hearts of these people on that day. Most certainly they had the right to feel that an undertaking had been well executed. The front page of the September 4, 1871, issued of the "Fort Wayne Daily Gazette" carries a glowing and enthusiastic description of the new church.

The German Reformed Church, corner of Washington and Webster Sts., was dedicated yesterday. This congregation was organized June, 1844, . . . The first trustees were Messrs. Rudolf Jasper, Christian Morell and George Nill. The church was very small at its beginnings but has been blessed with energetic ministers and laymen which explains the cause of its rapid growth. They have occupied their first meeting house until the present time and have for a considerable period felt the need of increased accommodations.

The present church building was begun in the spring of 1869 and has just been completed. It is built of pressed brick and is one of the handsomest church edifices in the city. It is 90 feet long and 50 feet wide. The height of the church is 38 feet, while the steeple towers 178 feet toward the heavens, and is plainly visible from all parts of the city.

The interior of the church is very handsome and elegant. It is frescoed in the highest kind of art, being as nice as any work of the kind in the city. It is lighted in day time by fine large stained glass windows, and at night by twenty-four burners on the sides and by one large chandelier with twenty lights, the finest piece of workmanship in the city. The interior is all finely finished, the woodwork, etc., being elegantly carved and giving evidences of careful work. The pulpit is directly opposite the entrance, while the gallery is over the three large doors. The building cost $23,000 and, complete as it is in every particular, is as fine a church as the city contains. The building committee is composed of the following gentlemen: E. Vordermark, R. Jasper, W. Kolmerten, J. W. Vordermark, E. J. Raehling (Ruehling), Wm. Shiefer, C. Morrell, Wm. Harbecker, and Rev. F. R. Schwedes, ex-officio.

Henceforth there is a steady growth in membership and denominational participation. St. John's has reached its majority.

Two years later Rev. Schwedes resigned and Rev. Carl Schaaf, of Sandusky, Ohio, was extended a call by the congregation. The Sandusky church, however, did not wish to accept his resignation so the Classis asked that the matter be dropped. Then Rev. J. B. Kniest of Buffalo was called, but his congregation also wished him to remain. Early in 1874 Rev. A. Krahn came, but because of illness and other circumstances remained less than two years. In 1875, during his pastorate, St. John's Church was host to the General Synod of the Reformed Church. The city of Fort Wayne, with its outstanding railroad facilities for that period was a good choice for such a conference. The large beautiful new church was an ideal meeting place for the large assembly. It was here, too, that the

present Young Men's Christian Association of Fort Wayne was organized in 1871.

After Rev. Krahn's departure the congregation renewed negotiations with Rev. Schaaf and this time with success. This eighteen-year pastorate was initiated July 1876. Unfortunately the condition of the congregation was not robust financially or spiritually. Many were discouraged because of the $2,000 debt. A recent general depression in the United States had brought discouragement, hardship, bitterness, and even division. Rev. Schaaf was not dismayed but plunged into the problem, bringing courage and optimism to his people. The payment of the debt was stressed and it was soon paid, with sufficient surplus collected to enlarge the parsonage. Despite the fact that ill health compelled him to take a year's leave of absence, during which time Rev. C. M. Schaaf served, Dr. Schaaf soon succeeded in unifying the congregation. Under his splendid leadership not only did the membership increase from 300 to 700, but the spirituality of the congregation seemed to grow. A sense of stewardship began to be evidenced. Less pressure was necessary in the collection of subscriptions, although comparativly large sums were necessary for the physical improvements that were made. The bell had cracked and was replaced (1885) by the two which are still in the steeple, at a cost of $760. It is said that when they were first installed their ringing brought practically the whole populace of Fort Wayne onto the streets, for they sounded so much like the town's fire bell. The church was redecorated at a cost of $2500. Plank sidewalks were placed in front of the church, and in 1881 water was piped into the parsonage.

The largest project was the building of the new parochial schoolhouse. In 1868 discussion of building a new school and church had gone on. Perhaps the plan for the new church was more elaborate and most costly than had first been intended, for the school problem dropped from view for some years. In April 1882 it was decided that since the existing building was in need of extensive repairs, it would be wise to raze it and build a new one. Just what the cost of this was is indefinite. That subscriptions to the amount of $3,000 were raised is known, but whether that covered the entire expense seems unlikely. A two-story building was erected at the rear of the church in 1884. Th upper rooms were used for school purposes and the lower ones for Sunday School classrooms for the children, the activities of the young people, and instruction classes. Many of our present church members attended this school. The building is now the west part of the present Sunday School unit.

In this period interest in the unfortunates was universal. The Reformed Church had been considering for some years the advisability of establishing a denominational orphanage in the midwest. At the meeting of the Synod in Galion, Ohio (1879), a Board of Orphans was appointed to investigate the feasibility of establishing such an institution in some central location in the western part of the Reformed Church area. In 1883 a committee selected from the membership of the Northwest and Central Synods, with Rev. J. H. Klein as chairman, was instructed to find a suitable specific site for such an orphanage. At the congregational meeting of St. John's in 1883 it was unanimously decided to petition the Orphans Home Board to locate the proposed orphanage at Fort Wayne, since a site had not yet been decided upon. The zeal of the congregation and the efforts of the pastor must have convinced the Board, for a fifty-seven acre tract northeast of Fort Wayne was chosen. The Board raised $1400 by subscription. Besides this, through the efforts of the pastors of St. John's Church and Salem Church in Fort Wayne, an additional $2500 was raised. On November 15, 1883, the corner stone was laid and in 1884 a two-story brick building was completed at a cost of $12,000. Ever since, the Fort Wayne Reformed Churches have looked upon this institution as their privileged responsibility and have given it helpful support. Many members have left substantial legacies to it.

Late in 1894 Dr. Schaaf, of whose work all speak with admiration, resigned and at the beginning of 1895 Rev. John H. Bosch, a young man fresh from the seminary, came to St. John's. He was ordained to the ministry January 13, 1895, and was installed as pastor of St. John's congregation by Zion's Classis. One of the first duties of the young minister was to prepare for the celebration of the congregation's Golden Anniversary, which, due to several causes, was not observed until 1896. Rev. Bosch and his young wife, the former Frances Schwedes, emphasized especially the work and interests of the young people. Their enthusiasm and efforts are still spoken of by members who were in the younger set during that period from the turn of the century up to World War I. During this pastorate the Sunday School was departmentalized and the Young Peoples' Society became affiliated with the Christian Endeavor movement. The Ladies' Aid, a society organized at least as early as 1868, was reorganized, and the Women's Missionary Society, the Girls' Missionary Guild, and the Mission Band were instituted. These organizations brought the membership into larger fields of activity and association. Another reform that seems amusing to us today was the action of the Consistory 1897) which permitted men and women to sit together in church.

The period 1898-1917 is conceded to have been a transition period for our country. The life and activity of St. John's during this period was one of change also. To a conservative congregation, such an era is not without pain and conflict. Considerable sums of money were spent in repair and expansion. In 1899 a new organ was purchased for the sum of $2300. The Sunday School building at the rear of the church was extended onto Lot No. 443 (1903) at a cost of $8,000. Extensive repairs and improvements were made to the church edifice. The exterior was refaced, a new heating system was installed, the interior was redecorated, and new pews and chandeliers were purchased. It is interesting that an electric organ blower was installed in this period. The street paving and laying of brick sidewalks called for an additional expenditure of $1500. The money for these improvements was not always forthcoming readily. Neverthless, during 1916 a twelve-room brick personage was built on Lot No. 444 on Washington Street.

The problem, however, that rocked the whole church organization and affected every individual of the congregation was the language question. As has already been mentioned, St. John's was originally a German congregation. As early as January 1864 some question concerning the language must have arisen, for it was decided by the Consistory that as long as a two-thirds vote existed for it the German language should be the dominant language and that even a one-third vote would retain it. Throughout the whole existence of the church the appellation "German Reformed" had been most tenaciously held.

The founding of the Grace Reformed Church in 1883 and the Heidelberg Reformed Church in 1895 for the purpose of conducting English services showed the trend of the times. It is certain that the action of these two groups brought losses to St. John's. The pastor, realizing the fundamental cause of these movements, tried to convince the congregation that remedial measures were imperative. In June 1901 Superintendent Study of the city schools was ordered by the Fort Wayne School Board to inform St. John's congregation that the city was discontinuing separate German schools the next year and that the building provided for the West German School was therefore to be returned to the church. The closing of this school removed the congregation's most effecetive weapon in combating the predominance of English. By 1908 the pastor stated that eight of the seventeen confirmants acknowledged that they understood none of the German service, while the other nine said that they got little from it. In that year bi-lingual communion services were initiated. In the confirmation class of 1912, nine were confirmed in German and the same number in English. In 1916

and 1917 the ratio was three in English to one in German, while in 1918 the entire class was confirmed in English.

In 1916-1917, reports in English filtered into the records, but not until January 1918 were the minutes of a congregational meeting recorded in English. In that meeting it was decided that hereafter the proceedings of the business of the congregational meetings should be recorded in the English language. The fact that the records for seventy-four years were kept in German accounts for the inconsistency in spelling of proper names in this history. Throughout the 1920's the language question received almost yearly attention. In 1921 it was decided by a 42-37 vote that there should be one German service per month. Minor adjustments were also made for German communion services at Easter and Christmas. In 1935 a committee was appointed to investigate the advisability of continuing German services since so few of the older members were able to attend. On July 10, 1935, the committee reported to the Consistory that it was deemed advisable to discontinue German services, and the recommendation was adoptd. Thus closed a very vital and at times stormy chapter in the history of St. John's.

Rev. Bosch left St. John's in the spring of 1917 after twenty-two years of service in Fort Wayne. During the summer months Rev. Ralph Worthman, then a student, was the pulpit supply. In the autumn of 1917 Rev. W. C. Beckmann came to spend four years in Fort Wayne. At this time, when the United States was engaged in a world conflict, people needed quiet, sympathetic guidance in transcending the realities of a world of strife. Fortunately, Rev. Beckmann was able to give this. During his pastorate the congregation emphasized benevolences and greatly increased its contributions for such. In the summer of 1921 Rev. Beckmann left to assume a professorship in the Mission House.

On November 1, 1921, Rev. F. H. Rupnow of St. Mary's, Ohio, became the pastor. His twenty-year pastoral period was one of the extremes in that it embraced the flourishing, extravagant 1920's and the severe depression of the 1930's. Fortunately, attention was given to improvement of the church property during the prosperous part of the period. At an expense of about $17,000 the Sunday School annex was extensively remodeled and other improvements were made. Later the interior of the church auditorium was altered and beautified. Since the church property was now in the immediate downtown district, the Washington Boulevard parsonage no longer afforded a comfortable or desirable home for a family. Accordingly, in 1923, Lot No. 116 in the Harrison Hill Addition, Seminole Circle, was purchased for $2,000 and within about a year the fourth parsonage, costing $15,200, was built.

In November 1929 Mrs. Caroline Hoffman, an older wealthy member of the congregation, gave St. John's a new organ on the following conditions: (1) that it be placed in the front on the first floor of the auditorium; (2) that the congregation accept it; (3) that such alterations should be made to the church auditorium as would be necessary for the proper location of the organ; (4) that St. John's would pay any cost of the organ above the sum of $12,000 which she stipulated as her gift. The congregation accepted the terms of the contract, and work began on the $40,000 project. On Sunday, November 16, 1930, the rededication services were held. The music of this fine organ and the beauty of the present auditorium are a source of joy to many.

In 1936 a distinct honor came to the congregation. It had the opportunity to be host to the second meeting of the General Synod of the newly merged Evangelical and Reformed Churches. This new Synod represented about 2,873 congregations and 659,659 communicant members. At this meeting the constitution for the newly created church was adopted and other related matters were dis-

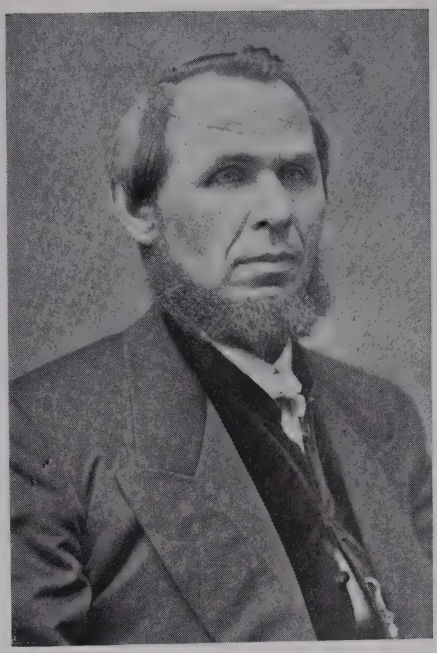
cussed and settled. St. John's offered its best in all respects, and all who attended appeared pleased with Fort Wayne hospitality and the efficient management of the details left to the pastor and the congregation.

In this period of the 1920's and 1930's much effort was put forth to make St. John's a recognized force in the community as well as in the denomination. The pastor, a fluent speaker, became well known in civic and religious circles, and the congregation came to be considered one of the outstanding religious groups of the city. Many substantial legacies came to the church during this pastorate. During these years particular emphasis was placed upon the activities for the men of the congregation. The first record of the report of the Men's Forum to the congregation appears in the minutes of the congregational meeting of January 1923. The women of the congregation gained new importance in this period by receiving the right to vote in congregational meetings. In 1941 Dr. Rupnow left Fort Wayne to accept a call in Lansing, Michigan.

In October, 1941, Dr. John W. Myers of Orville, Ohio, came to St. John's as pastor. In the short time he has served he has made a place for himself within the community as well as the church. Of special interest is his work as chairman of the Committee on Religious Education for the Associated Churches of Fort Wayne, which association was organized in St. John's in 1943. Largely through his efforts a course in religious education will be instituted in the third and fourth grades of the public schools of the city in the year 1944-1945. Within our own congregation he has effected the reorganization of the various organizations of the church as outlined by the Evangelical and Reformed Church. His untiring efforts to maintain contact with the 117 young men and women of the congregation who are now in all parts of the world in the service of their country are laudable. Under his leadership plans for an extensive post-war building and expansion program have moved rapidly. The proposed plans call for an outlay of approximately $50,000, of which amount about half has already been raised. St. John's, with its 1044 active resident members, is still looking to the future.

What will the second hundred years bring to the church which, as nearly as can be ascertained, has the distinction of being the oldest Reformed Church in the state of Indiana?

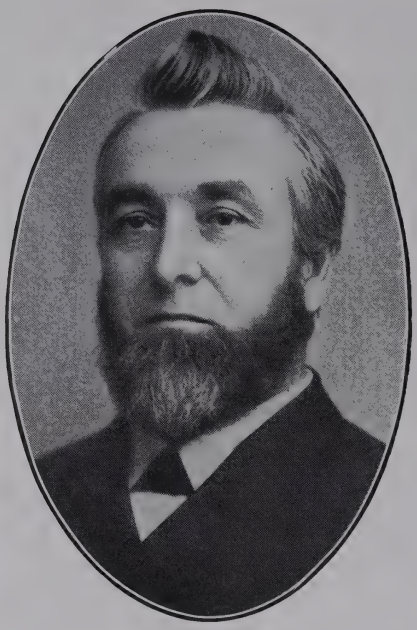
The Rev. J. Bossard, D. D.
1848-1854



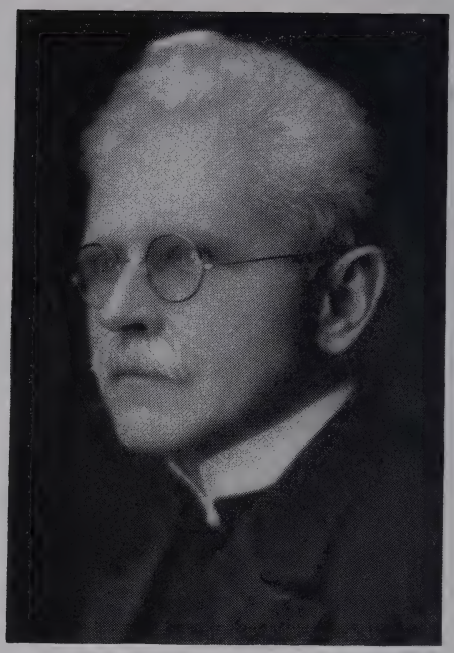
The Rev. J. W. Klein, D. D.
1855-1868

The Rev. F. R. Schwedes, D. D.
1868-1873

The Rev. A. Krahn
1874-1875

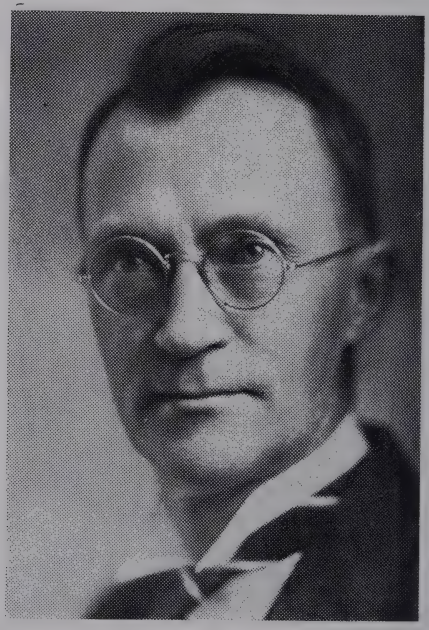


The Rev. Carl Schaaf, D. D.
1876-1894



The Rev. John H. Bosch
1895-1917

The Rev. W. C. Beckman, Ph. D.
1917-1921



The Rev. F. H. Rupnow, D. D.
1921-1941

The Women's Guild

First Row: Mrs. Homer Altevogt, Vice-President; Mrs. Herman Rockhill, President; Mrs. Robert Clymer, Recording Secretary.

Second Row: Mrs. John W. Myers, 2nd Vice-President; Miss Eleanor Reiff, Financial Secretary; Mrs. Leonard Roebel, Treasurer; Mrs. George Fischer, Corresponding Secretary.

December fourth, 1941, was known as Organization Day in our Church. The Women's Missionary Society and the Ladies' Aid and all the women of the Church merged into "The Women's Guild." Dr. John W. Myers, our pastor, presided at this first meeting and the following officers were elected: Mrs. Chester Schuelke, president; Mrs. Herman Rockhill, vice-president; Mrs. Homer Altevogt, recording secretary; Mrs. Earl Siebold, treasurer; and Miss Edith Heck, financial secretary.

Under the leadership of these officers, the following circles and departments were developed: Spiritual Life, Missionary, Stewardship, Education, Christian Citizenship, Social Service, Membership, Thankoffering, Home Service, and the Senior and Junior Girls' Guild. A Circle for Young Mothers was added in 1944. The Circles meet monthly and the General Guild has six meetings during the year. Varied and interesting programs are used at these meetings.

Some of the projects of these departments have been: Calling on the shut-ins; sending cards or flowers to the sick; sewing for the Red Cross and for the local church; packing cookies for the boys in service; serving dinner to almost three hundred service men at the U. S. O.; holding a reception for new members; providing carpet and draperies for the church office; and promoting reading of the Bible, the "Messenger," and the reading course. They also cocperate with the Federated Council of Church Women in the School of Missions, World Day of Prayer, and in other city-wide meetings.

The purpose of the Women's Guild is to "unite all the women of the Church in Christian fellowship, and with divine help and guidance, to develop an understanding of the work of the entire Church, deepen spiritual life, stimulate sacrificial giving, and promote Christian service in the home, the local church, the denomination, the community, the nation and the world."

Young People's Work

From the beginning of our church life the young people have been very active in its service. In the early days there were fewer outside interests, so the young men and young women centered their activities in the Young People's Society. In addition to this society there was need for an intermediary group, which was later organized as the "Watchers and Workers Society," under adult leadership. Their program consisted of Bible study, memory work, and recreational activities.

Another need to be met was an organization for the girls and young women. As a result the Young Ladies' Guild came into being, with an active membership sometimes as high as fifty. They sought to develop the spiritual and social life of the members, did welfare work and gave pageants and plays. One of the highlights of this organization was the sponsoring of an annual New Year's Eve midnight watch party for all young people of the church.

In the course of time, about 1914, four Standard Teacher Training Courses were given during the Sunday morning study period as well as during the week. Later one group decided to continue its quest of development in Leadership Training, so an advanced class was organized with a four-year course, covering nine books, which led to a diploma from the Indiana Council of Christian Education.

In these classes the need for expansion became apparent, and the idea of Christian Endeavor was fostered and developed. In 1915 the "Ever Ready Christian Endeavor Society" was organized with a charter membership of fifteen members. This membership grew rapidly, and soon our society was outstanding in the city, county, and district. For many years it supported a girl (Rosie Lookingglass) at the Indian Mission School at Neilsville, Wisconsin.

The Christian Endeavor Society continued its activities for many years until the Evangelical and Reformed church merger. Then the Youth Fellowship, Senior and Junior, were organized according to our own denominational standards. Today the youth work is carried on by a Youth Council.

Another organization which is worthy of mention here is the "Foxy Players," interested principally in religious dramatics. This organization grew out of the dramatic interest which a Sunday School class of girls with their teacher displayed. The interest spread until a larger group of young men and women with two adult advisors became active. Besides providing a large number of inspirational religious plays and pageants, this group was also instrumental in remodeling and improving the stage facilities and providing a new curtain for our auditorium stage.

We recognize today, as we have in the past, the great need for religious education and the opportunity for expression in the daily lives of our young people. Many changes are taking place in the world today. We must adapt ourselves to these changes and continue to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Church School Officers

Front Row: Dr. Myers, Director of Education, C. E. Rossell, General Superintendent, Chester Schuelke, Chairman of Education Committee.

Back Row: Miss Christine Zollinger, Secretary of Education Committee. Departmental Superintendents: Miss Lucille Frost, Beginners; E. H. Siebold, Adult; Mrs. J. W. Myers, Junior; Mrs. Leonard Roebel, Cradle Roll; Mrs. John Pitts, Home Dept. Mrs. Clyde Eulitt, Primary Department Superintendent, and Howard Potts, Treasurer, are not in the picture.

CHOIR

Front Row, left to right: Patty Baker, Ruth Fischer, Fred W. Blcemker, Director; Mrs. G. Doyal White, Organist; Nancy Siebold.

Second Row: Margaret Lissner, F. E. Servos, E. H. Siebold, John Meiners, Mrs. Louis Zollinger.

Third Row: Abram Jones, Doris Siebold, Lucille Frost, Charles Fetter and Mrs. Francis Marbaugh. Miss Helen Limbert, soprano soloist, is not in the picture.

BROTHERHOOD OFFICERS

First Row: Richard Luther, Secretary; F. Edward Servos, President.
Back Row: C. E. Rossell, 2nd Vice-President; Chester E. Schuelke, Vice-President; Francis Herdrick, Treasurer.

A few years previous to World War 1, a Men's Bible Class was formed, which was the start of the men's organization as we know it today. This class met in what was then known as the Ladies' Aid Room in the rear of the church at the same time Sunday School was held elsewhere in the building. Rev. John Bosch was the teacher. The class held social gatherings in the various homes and sponsored fellowship dinners in the church as well as picnics at the farms of some members on Saturday afternoons. There was considerable opposition among the members when the majority voted to join the Sunday School.

In 1923 the group entertained the Brotherhood of St. Peter's Church, Huntington. One of the high lights of the class was the return visit. We filled two interurban special cars and were met at the station by the Huntington Brotherhood, with appropriate banners, and the Huntington Band, and paraded through the streets to the parish hall of St. Peter's.

This seemed to be the beginning of the Men's Congress in the Fort Wayne Classis. St. John's was the first host to this great Congress, and entertained it for the 10th and 17th annual meetings. Large numbers of men showed great enthusiasm for these all-day meetings. Our Congress was an inspiration to other Classes, and many other Men's Congresses were started in other areas. Many outstanding churchmen addressed us and the music at these gatherings was of high order.

In 1923 we organized what was called the Men's Forum of the St. John's Reformed Church, and most of the men of our church were active members of the organization.

In 1942 we became affiliated with the Brotherhood of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and we are now known as the Men's Brotherhood. Every man of the church now automatically becomes a member. In recent years many of our young men have been called away, but the same enthusiasm is shown. It is hoped that when our 115 boys return from military service we will have a strong Brotherhood for these young fellows to take over and carry to new heights.

MEMORIALS

Through the years a number of memorials have been placed in the church. There is no complete record of all of them. Those known include the following:

Stained Glass Windows in memory of:

Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Jasper

Mrs. Anne E. and Bertha Klebe and Clifford H. Gable

Mr. and Mrs. Valentin Kauder

Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Stolte

Mr. and Mrs. Ernst Vordermark and Mr. and Mrs. Wilhelm Rohlmann

Mrs. Katherine Hilgemann and Mrs. Marie Boss

Mr. and Mrs. Friedrich Hockemeier

Friedrich and Sophia Altekruse

1926—Baptismal Font, by Mrs. William Vogeley and Mrs. William Hachmeyer

1928—Caroline Hoffman, three manual memorial pipe organ

1929—Bequest from the William Hildebrand estate

1929—Bequest from the estate of Mrs. Mary Hunsche

1929—The Lectren, in memory of Mrs. Caroline Altekruse Benz by Lillie Benz

1929—Schaaf Memorial Pulpit, in honor of Dr. C. Schaaf, given by his children

1929—Altar Cross, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Schuster, by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schuster

1929—Altar Vases, in memory of Mrs. Susanna Roth and Mrs. Matilda Roth Leitch, by Mrs. Edward Herrlinger

1930—Hymn Boards by Mrs. Caroline Bremer

1934—House, from the estate of Mr. and Mrs. William Vogeley

1937—A bequest from the estate of Mrs. Catherine Eggeman.

1939—A bequest from the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Fortmeyer

1942—Altar Cross in memory of Women of Ladies Aid

1942—Altar Candlesticks in memory of Women of the Missionary Society

1942—A bequest from the estate of Clarence Heck

1943—Candelabras by the 1943 Confirmation Class

1943—Offering Plates, a memorial to Mrs. Henry Jacobs, by the family (Not available until after the war)

1944—Missal Stand presented by the 1944 Confirmation Class

"Stir up one another to love and good deeds." Hebrews 10:24 (Moffatt).

1929—Altar in memory of Frederick H. Peters by Mrs. Peters and children.

The Unfinished Task

Now that we know whence we came, let us consider where we are going. The excellent history record shows how well "our fathers" planned, worked, and built. We will be no less faithful. The good work begun must be continued.

Our first post-war task is to provide adequate facilities and equipment for a more efficient Christian education program. The responsibility of training the children and youth of the congregation and of the community is tremendous. There is no better way to perpetuate the cherished memory of a departed loved one than by a gift to the "Building and Expansion Fund."

There are already 117 men and women from the congregation in the service of their country. We must have a place and a vital program for them when they return. They must be re-integrated into the life of the family, the community, and the church. Our proposed social hall, department rooms and chapel will be a big help in this task. The accompanying sketch shows the beautiful enlarged, complete building in which we hope to begin the second century of service.

The "Crusade for Christ" must go on a year-around basis for all of us. We rejoice in the fact that over one thousand members call this "their church" at the end of this first century. A growing church is a living church. Let us keep it an alive church and continue to grow in the years ahead. The total program of the Church merits our whole-hearted support. Let us gratefully and gracefully accept our increasing share of Kingdom service. "Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be strong men! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks."

The Voice of God Is Calling

The voice of God is calling; it summons unto men
As once he spake in Zion, so now he speaks again:
Whom shall I send to succor my people in their need?
Whom shall I send to loosen the bond of shame and greed?

I hear my people crying in cot and mine and slum;
No field or mart is silent, no city street is dumb.
I see my people falling in warfare and respair.
Whom shall I send to shatter the fetters which they bear?

We heed, O Lord, Thy summons, and answer: Here are we!
Send us upon Thine errand, let us Thy servants be.
Our strength is dust and ashes, our years a passing hour;
But Thou canst use our weakness to magnify Thy power.

From complacency save us; from pride and ease absolve;
Purge us of low desire: lift us to high resolve;
Take us and make us holy; teach us Thy will and way.
Speak, and, behold! we answer; command, and we obey!

The HF Group
Indiana Plant
109195 B 29 00
9/21/2007